

**A PLEA FOR AN
IMMEDIATE
PEACE
BY NEGOTIATION**

GEORGE W. HARTMANN, Ph. D.

WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE

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GEORGE W. HARTMANN is Professor of Educational Psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University. He was a foreign traveling post-doctoral fellow of the Social Science Research Council in 1930-1931 and the third President of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (1939). Among his publications are *Gestalt Psychology* (1935) and *Educational Psychology* (1941); he has also served as Editor of *The Social Frontier* and the Yearbook on *Industrial Conflict*. An article entitled "Pacifism and Its Opponents in the Light of Value Theory" which originally appeared in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* was reprinted by the War Resisters League. Dr. Hartmann is a member of the Board of Directors of *The Conscientious Objector* and the Executive Committee of the War Resisters League.

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A PLEA FOR AN IMMEDIATE PEACE BY NEGOTIATION

We are in the midst of one of the most tragic periods in the history of mankind. The dwindling number of us who are still privileged to live in relative safety and comfort remain constantly aware that needless death and disaster are everywhere ruining the happiness of our race. Each day men, women, and children perish in agony at the hands of their fellow human beings. The inspired work of generations of labor vanishes in a few fierce moments of destructive fury. Never has this earth been the scene of such universal and deliberate terror, slaughter, and suffering.

Normal persons grow sick and depressed whenever their sensitivities compel them to respond to these somber realities. The vast energies of rival continents and hemispheres are increasingly devoted to the techniques of killing. In all lands artists and scientists and priests find the fulfillment of their social mission in furthering this process of Mass Murder. Perhaps the saddest mood of all appears when some of our apparently kindly neighbors gloat with fiendish delight at the miseries of those they call the "enemy" and express a resolve to magnify these wounds until the will to resist us is utterly broken.

Yet we cannot allow the unmeasured magnitude of this man-made catastrophe to overwhelm us. It is still our grand task to master the physical and social environment, to improve ourselves, and to do all in our power to persuade our fellow-creatures to labor to these ends, rather than devoting their most arduous endeavors to their mutual annihilation. How shall we take hold of a problem so immense?

How Clear Are the Objectives of the United Nations?

At the moment many American communities are humming with discussions about "war aims." Often these sessions consider the same problems under the alternative label of "peace aims" on the assumption that these goals are to be realized in an era of comparative calm to which the present conflict is a sorrowful

but necessary preliminary. While there is much that is contradictory in these numerous proposals, one can be glad that there is this interest in shaping on paper the structure of the post-war world, even though it is probably being encouraged in high quarters as a means of deflecting critical attention from the actual conduct of hostilities and thereby ensuring acceptance of the brutal accompaniments of total war.

Most of these *unofficial* schemes have their origin, via prestige suggestion, in the planks in the Churchill-Roosevelt Atlantic Charter, the latest and only *official* statement as to what this war is all about from the Anglo-American viewpoint.* Unfortunately this document is one of the least inspiring calls to battle that any great conflict has ever brought forth. It is doubtful if many belligerent patriots are being energized by the pale language and still paler content of this lifeless text. Under the circumstances, no surprise is occasioned when competent observers in both Britain and America remark that the average man has only a fair idea of what he is fighting *against* and no more than the haziest notion of what he is fighting *for*. While I fully understand that in the perverted rationale of the institution of war, every negative can be converted into a positive and vice versa, I am sure that consistency and clarity in this area will be furthered if I ask a few definite, specific, and, I fear, embarrassing questions of those who maintain that great permanent social good will result from the horrors of this war:

1. Are we, as a people, committed to returning Malaysia, Burma, Hong-Kong, and other British colonies to English or "white man" rule?

2. Are we pledged to restore the Western boundaries of Soviet Russia as of June 1941, which notoriously included territory that had just been forcibly seized from Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Rumania?

3. Are the United Nations obligated to preserve the policy of a *White* Australia for an island-continent as large as the United

*The subsequent Anglo-Russian 20-year military alliance and the associated executive "agreement", pact, or understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union seem to be animated by a World "balance-of-power" theory as a successor to the obsolete European or Continental political equilibrium. Presumably this is the diplomatic device for implementing the terms of the Atlantic Charter.

States? If so, how well does this sit with our allies, the colored people of China and India?

4. Is Java to be restored to Holland without a plebiscite among the native inhabitants?

5. Are the people of Germany, Italy, and Japan, and their satellite states to be broken into smaller units, forcibly de-industrialized (as the influential Vansittart-Knox mentality in Britain and America suggests), and compelled to pay indefinitely for the maintenance of foreign garrisons—or do we plan to let their advances in modern technology aid in producing the highest possible standard of living for all the nations of the globe?

6. In general, are we committed to a re-establishment of the European *status quo ante* of September 1938 (the pre-Munich period)—a defective social system that itself contributed so much to the catastrophe that has engulfed us?

7. Do we intend to force parliamentary institutions upon all nations which have abandoned them or which never had them—or will we insist upon their adoption by the Axis powers only, leaving the Russian, Iberian, Asiatic, and Latin-American despotisms to flourish unhindered?

8. Do our national leaders really believe that this is the "final war to end all future wars"—or are they not seriously considering the possibility of a future clash between an expanded Soviet and the Anglo-American alliance; or even worse, a color war between Orient and Occident?

War Supporters: A Medley of Incompatible Groups

We would be less than worldly-wise if we did not, on the basis of ample historical precedent, suspect that a number of ugly things are being contemplated by those who are in the driver's seat of the victor's vehicle, masked though these intentions be by diplomatic phrases redolent of superficial innocence. After all, it is quite clear that different groups are supporting the war for very diverse reasons. Mr. Willkie, and oddly enough, Thurman Arnold, think this is a golden opportunity to continue capitalism as part of our national folklore; *Life*, *Time*, and *Fortune* believe this is America's God-given chance to rule the world for our advantage from Washington and New York; others

want to see the countries of their family origin (with which they are emotionally identified) restored to their former dignity as independent sovereign states; the Communists and their fellow-travelers are for the war effort so long as it implies "aid to Russia"; organized labor is effectively "bribed" by higher wages and steady work; and some (not confined to jealous West Coast agriculturists) see this war as a way of keeping certain races, especially the yellow, in their place—which to them means at the bottom of the social heap.

Nobler reasons also exist, but these are much weaker politically. Many liberals see this conflict as a true War for Democratic Survival; a number of social democrats discern in the defeat of the Axis an indispensable pre-condition for the prospective triumph of socialism in the not-too-distant future; and some internationalists believe that the Anglo-Saxon conception of "liberty under law" must be universalized for the sake of human progress.

A Few Things Men Forget When They Go to Battle

Before one appraises any specific war or peace goal, it is always well to state the basic general principle from which one derives his more particularized judgments. It happens that I am convinced there is no individual or group purpose, no matter how precious, which is worth the lives of a million men—and if there were, I am certain it could be attained by some other method without demanding such an appalling sacrifice. Modern man is victimized by a dreary superstition which declares nothing constructive can be accomplished in the international scene without a substantial blood offering. In this respect he is like our ancestors who slew their best beloved upon the altar of Baal or cast them into the fiery furnace of Moloch in order that rain should fall, the state be preserved, and the gods continue to smile upon the activities of men. I know of no better illustration of Voltaire's dictum that men will commit cruelties so long as they believe absurdities.

Even in the midst of combat, it is appropriate that we ask our fellow-citizens to consider whether the goals for which they are ostensibly dying could not equally if not better be reached without armed conflict. As it is, millions have already died without a decision being won by either side. If it were possible to

compute accurately the direct and indirect money costs of the war to this hour, they would probably be sufficient to rebuild the entire material edifice of either the North American or the European continents.

Plainly motives of an extraordinarily powerful sort must have been released to achieve such a ghastly wastage of human and natural resources. Equally clearly these motives to wreck, starve, and slay continue to operate with apparently undiminished force. Yet it should surprise no one with a minimum of psychological insight to find that the drives which support this amazing madness are normally and inevitably changed by the concomitants and consequences of their own activity. Not only is it possible, but it is altogether certain, that whatever intentions a government may have at the beginning of a war, these purposes do not remain unaltered until the middle or end of one. Developmental or degenerative powers come into play which modify them either for the better or for the worse.

Those of us who have disavowed the war system may rightly remind the supporters of this pitiless institution that it is always possible to pay too high a price for a certain goal. Thus, Congress has pledged the lives and property of all Americans for the victorious prosecution of this war. In other words, no matter how much it may cost in treasure and blood, this country says it intends to impose its will upon its foes. I suspect, however, that a little hyperbole and self-deception are involved in this assertion. Certain combat units have literally fought to the last man, but no large nation has ever done so. Hence, when nations declare they pledge *everything* they have to avoid defeat, operationally they really mean no more than "a certain undetermined but presumably reasonable or bearable loss."

Transforming the Community's Purposes

Into such a context, the skeptical but not irreverent pacifist may realistically present his alternative proposals designed to hold social losses to a minimum by re-structuring the national purpose so that real values are maintained and advanced, and spurious ones discarded. Most "blueprints" for the Post-War World are impatiently waved aside by leading statesmen as irrelevant, untimely, disturbing, and futile. They and their followers claim one must first beat the adversary before one decides

what to do with him. Small wonder that the search for a glowing title to glamorize this war has had such ill success! A few snappy slogans to make meaningless sacrifices palatable are all right—but don't be too precise about the "reconstruction" to come after the enemy surrenders!

Yet such single-minded concentration upon a military triumph through superior force is psychologically defective. It is certainly poor diplomatic and military strategy, although far be it for a pacifist to offer advice as to how to run a good and efficient war. Nonetheless, it is a fact that a nation's determination to fight is certainly stronger if the citizens actually know and are agreed about the point of all the suffering involved. Likewise the "enemy" populations, assuming they can overcome the skepticism generated by earlier cases of gross deceit, may be affected by the knowledge that their opponents are honestly struggling for reasonable and decent objectives, and that their own presumably less enlightened goals (implicit or explicit) suffer by comparison.

However, on this occasion it is not my purpose to explore the various ways of raising domestic civilian and combat-force morale while simultaneously seeking to lower the morale of the alleged adversary. The business of those who hope and labor for a World Commonwealth is to do what they can to boost the morale, i.e., the sense of well-being, of all men everywhere, not to discriminate against some and to display favoritism toward others. I therefore confess to a certain disinterest in ephemeral *war* aims or even in *peace* aims as such; what I am vitally concerned about could much better be designated as permanent *social* aims.

An Eight-Fold Magna Carta for All Humanity

The one real issue which all Mankind faces today, and which it would be confronting even if peace conditions of the pre-1939 or pre-Pearl Harbor varieties obtained, is simply this:

How shall the entire World be organized and managed so that the two billion members of the human species who live on its surface may enjoy a state of affairs properly characterized as one of Peace, Plenty, and Freedom?

I put the question in this form because I am convinced that any less universal or comprehensive approach is a hurtful evasion of the paramount problem of the twentieth century. For me and other advocates of the Welfare or Service State, the physical resources and the cultural achievements of the past and present are, or should be, the common property of all the people of the Earth, to be used to bring to each and every person wherever he may be that better life for which he strives. I hasten to add that to think *globally*, as any acceptance of this proposition requires, does not mean to think *imperialistically*; and that the "planetary consciousness" here enjoined has in it nothing of the bellicosity of the interventionist sentiment. The point of view I am maintaining is that we do not need to club, blockade, and torture others into submission before winning their consent (by the method of mutual agreement) to a universally valid program for satisfying human wants. The curious illogic of war which holds that one must first injure one's adversaries ere one begins to behave decently toward them must be repudiated before we can start to realize the Great Social Aim of our generation.

In my judgment, we are witnessing at present something like a world-wide collectivist revolution, obscured as this underlying trend may be by the din and smoke of armed combat. By this I mean that the common man everywhere is dimly aware that Modern Science has brought us to the threshold of an Age of Abundance and that the gross lacks and frustrations he is still compelled to endure are largely unnecessary. This contemporary generic man is less interested in the hollow details of an already obsolete *Atlantic Charter* than he is in the basic program of the *World Charter* here proposed that at least attempts to ensure him what his organism requires, no matter what country or clime he calls home. This new Charter has not been secretly prepared on a battleship surrounded by all the paraphernalia of war. It is simply a series of deductions from the root conviction that organized societies make sense only as they provide the following eight *services* to every personality, as a minimum of decent existence:

1. *The maintenance and security of every individual's life.* All efforts at social reform assume that life is worth living. Likewise every attempt to secure experiences of value presupposes some creature to act as valuer. Yet our current "civilization"

is not distinguished by the high regard it has for human life as such. By means of such anachronisms as capital punishment and war, we put to death many persons who usually wish to continue to live; and by our curious attitudes toward suicide and euthanasia we prevent death from coming to the few who eagerly seek it. A culture at once so hypocritical and paradoxical needs to be made healthful by the recognition (and action thereupon) that the life of a Russian, a Chinese, and a German is as valuable—but no more so—as the life of an Englishman, an Italian, and an American. For both the individual and the community to keep a resolution never to take human life without the consent of the person affected, no matter what the circumstances, is perhaps the surest means of restoring sanity and security to a frightened and deranged population. In a world of relatives, this is one absolute I have no hesitancy in offering.

2. *Food supplies adequate to provide optimal nutrition for all.* The best evidence we have indicates that fully one-half of the human race is chronically undernourished or malnourished. Obviously war enlarges the ratio of persons so affected. "Good" wars and "justifiable" wars are peculiarly designed to increase the amount of hunger in the world. Any social system which fails to feed its people equitably is clearly defective. It must be supplanted by a society which can do at least that much for its citizens.

3. *Complete health and medical services for all men everywhere.* At present, large stretches of the globe are deprived of the most elementary benefits of sanitation. The gross differences in average longevity between different countries and different social groups reflect all too clearly the fact that man has usually denied he was his brother's keeper. Here is another elementary social purpose which war frustrates—for has it not regularly increased the death rate, lowered the birth rate, and brought pestilence and famine in its wake?

4. *Spacious and hygienic housing for all families.* The typical human being (especially if one includes the Asiatics who comprise over half of mankind) lives not in a sunny airy room he can call his own but in a crowded smelly hovel. Yet decent shelter remains a primitive requirement for the Good Life even in the tropics (perhaps I should say, especially there). Does not war lead to a diminution of home building and accentuate the

insufficiencies of even peace-time dwelling conditions? Are not countless families literally left without a roof over their heads by the devastation of "scorched earth" retreats, the bombing of cities, and the battles in village streets? To what great and noble end is all this done?

5. *Work at some socially useful task suitable to one's interests and abilities.* The terrible depression of the 'thirties was marked in all industrial countries by an unprecedented volume of unemployment. It is significant that no major nation succeeded in reducing the number of unemployed except by recourse to armament economics with its inevitable sequel of war. Now there is a labor shortage in every country. 'Tis curious how many men suddenly become useful to an economy when they can be employed to kill (or contribute to the killing of) their fellow workers in other lands. That unions have generally welcomed and supported this development is labor's supreme disgrace. To earn one's income making bombs, poison gas, or similar weapons is like drawing the wages of the public executioner. Munitions work is not socially productive activity, and our vast conscript armies are certainly not suitable to the interests and abilities of most of the draftees, for if they were, there would be no trouble recruiting them from volunteers. Yet over half of the industrial output of the world's factories now goes to make instruments of destruction while civilian and consumer goods—never too plentiful at best—decline sharply in both quality and quantity.

6. *The abolition of illiteracy through a World Educational Authority.* It is not commonly known that only a minority of the earth's population can read and write. After two centuries of British rule, India remains about 94% illiterate—a ghastly commentary on the alleged benefits of imperialism to a colonial people. The need for education and still more and better education is felt on every hand. Yet war acts as a blight upon the schools. We are all familiar with the harm done to the splendid German university system by the Nazi regime—largely in the name of more effective preparation for war. What we too often forget is that war in *every* land brings with it a decline in the quality of the intellectual life. Fear, hate, and prejudice do not make for objectivity or excellence in scholarship and research. Instead, propaganda and passion combine to produce new forms of ignorance and stupidity. The enlightened quest for knowledge

is overshadowed by the lust for blood or the craving for power, and university faculties at times resemble mobs of neurotic sadists. Few indeed are the spectacles which are as disheartening as this.

7. *Freedom of movement for individuals and population groups.* I have postponed until this point any further mention of the term "freedom" as a legitimate end of social effort because I fear this magnificent word has been intolerably abused by the rhetoricians and journalists of our time. Abstract freedom, like most abstractions, is an empty concept until concretized in a series of *definite conditions* such as I am outlining in this eight-point World Charter. In this instance, I am suggesting that the world establish not free trade in goods, desirable as that is, but something even more elementary, viz., the removal of all artificial barriers to the mobility of persons. Our own country's immigration policy since the end of the first World War is probably the ugliest denial of the principle here advanced. The assumption that we can monopolize access to the resources of this great continent solely on the ground that we got here first is to me an indecent bit of national arrogance. I have no doubt that this thoroughly selfish act of America's contributed to heightening the tensions of Europe which led to the eventual explosion. Other nations, including those with whom we are now at war, offended in similar ways. Ethically, however, two wrongs do not make a single right. The hostile acts of discrimination implied in exclusion policies must be abandoned, since their maintenance is a major factor in making for war. If there be anything which made the Japanese population psychologically ready to accept war with the United States, it has been our blunt, cruel, and untrue assertion for decades that Scotsmen and other "Nordics" were more desirable citizens of this fair land than those who came from Asia. No man is truly free unless he can leave an unpromising site and go to the ends of the earth if he so desires in search of that pattern of life he deems good for himself and his kin.

8. *Freedom of expression and communication.* I use this phrase to refer to the classic civil liberties, particularly the key items of freedom of thought and utterance. In a truly solemn sense, this is the one right preservative of all other rights. No streamlined tyranny or suave dictatorship can make men forget

that the best in them requires that this condition of orderly progress be met. Men must not only be *permitted* to be articulate if they are strongly motivated to express themselves—they must be helped and *encouraged* to be so, and not stigmatized as "reds" and enemies of the American way of life, or terrorized as fifth, sixth, or twenty-third columnists because they speak or write as their respect for integrity of thinking demands. No public or private personage or social institution is above criticism either in war or in peace. To proclaim and practice the contrary doctrine is to elevate Force above Reason and Spirit and to try to halt the quest of man for finer and better things.

The Will to Reinforce Our Insight Concerning the Unity of our Species

People everywhere will support this minimum program of social guarantees because they are rooted in the very nature of the human organism. The structure of our bodies attests to their elemental validity. Man undoubtedly wants, and unquestionably should have, more than is here set forth; but we may be certain that he wants at least this much whether he be young or old, white or colored, Christian or infidel. Because their bodies and minds are essentially like our own, the Germans, Italians, and Japanese esteem these things just as much as the English, Russians, Chinese, and Americans do.

If these considerations be true—and I see no effective way of denying them—then in all earnestness let me ask: Why not seek a *negotiated* peace now? Plainly the longer the war lasts, the harder it will be to reach this eight-fold goal. If one boasts grimly that one is opposed to a *negotiated* peace, then it is well to be reminded that the opposite of a peace by agreement is a *dictated* peace—a curious kind for alleged democrats to prefer. What does traditional law declare about contracts made under duress? A major component of the spirit of democracy is the principle of consent, not the principle of unilateral dominance and imposition.

One need offer no apology for striving to bring this war to an immediate end or for seeking to build at once a "just and durable peace", not upon the dubious and repulsive premise of complete military triumph for one division of mankind and utter defeat for another, but upon the sounder basis of what both

sides desire because they share in common the attributes of mortal man. Conflict invariably rests upon an exaggerated estimation of the significance of observable *differences* between people; it is always reducible or even avoidable by a corrective emphasis upon their *likenesses*. Supporters of the war method of resolving social issues tacitly acknowledge this when they seek to unite the home population around such forward-looking schemes for satisfying essential needs as the Malvern Conference recommendations for England and the important new Bill of Rights proposed for the United States by the National Resources Planning Board.* Fine as these two documents are, they both contain a pair of fatal defects—(1) each insists that the war must be fought until the United Nations are victorious, and (2) each parochially confines its presumptive benefits to its own nationals and fails to make them of world-wide application.

Of these, the first flaw is the more serious. It is another tiresome case of "pie in the sky" as soon as the Big Bad Wolf is captured. There was a Little Bad Hohenzollern who stood in the way in 1918; next time our statesmen will have no trouble in pointing to some Monstrous Martian who must first be eliminated before we can enter the Promised Land. Not ordinary dullness but an exceptionally high order of stupidity is required to believe that the way to make Americans happy is to make Germans, Japanese, etc., miserable. Action based upon such a view merely results in more misery all around.

I urge Messrs. Roosevelt and Churchill and their colleagues and successors to adopt this World Charter as a means of fusing their war and peace aims into a set of social aims for all mankind. They or their spokesmen may respond that my eight points are "all right" (a euphemism for "harmless platitudes"), but that the other fellows are so degraded that they must first be pounded into submission before they will accept these purposes. That the so-called aggressor powers have been guilty of unpardonable cruelties is plain, although it is well to remember that we too have become quite expert in the gentle art of mass murder. But let us not evade the basic point: is it really necessary to lie, hate, starve, and kill on a grand scale without first finding

*This last is fully analyzed in a spirit of advocacy in the May 1942 issue of THE FRONTIERS OF DEMOCRACY, a periodical published by the Progressive Education Association.

out if this program of "least common denominators" for civilized community life meets the wishes of the rival alliance as well as ourselves? Are we so sure that Hitler is opposed to vocational guidance? That Mussolini is against sanitation? Or Hirohito hostile to public schools? Or all of them combined antagonistic to the idea of a decent diet for everybody? Even in the improbable event that these heads of states were negatively disposed toward these goals, is it not practically certain that their peoples as a whole favor them? If this be so, then what excuse have we for not making the physical, intellectual, and moral effort required to achieve these elementary but grand objectives?

The Attitudinal Basis and Structural Machinery for a World "State"

A Joint Congressional World Organization Committee should be established quickly (with or without Executive support) to sponsor the broad principles of the program here presented and to arrange for their distribution via radio and otherwise to every corner of the earth. We have here a basis for initiating peace proposals which stresses such essentials as the human stomach and not such trivia as what piece of soil shall be administered by which racial group. *How* anything is managed is far more significant than *who* does it.

As soon as public opinion is willing to think in these terms—and I have no doubt that it is far more ready to do so than some timid and unimaginative "opinion-makers" themselves believe—a World Constitutional Convention must be assembled as the necessary instrument for objectifying these ideals. This is a daring proposal, to be sure; but let no one malign it as a crazy, "utopian", and impracticable one. After a prospective armistice, some sort of international conference is certain to be held. Obviously *physical* difficulties do not stand in the way of converting this into a constitution-making body for our troubled planet; the barriers and resistances are largely *mental*, and these we must labor unremittingly to overcome. If a World Government committed to the attainment of the eight ends specified above is thus brought into being, no one need fear about the future of our species. Such a World Order will necessarily be "democratic" for the interrelated freedoms and liberties it embodies are authentic goods to all men everywhere. The chief business of this

administrative structure will be the more or less simultaneous elevation of the standard of living of the entire human family, even if that means taxing privileged areas like the United States and Sweden in order to equalize opportunities for personality growth in less favored regions like Chile and Persia.

Here then are understandable aims which cannot fail to promote the unity of mankind. It is not necessary to fight a cruel war to get them. Such a benighted conviction is a vestige of the ancient tribal myth that human sacrifice alone secures divine grace. The war itself must stop—and stop soon—before these goals can be won. From the solid base thus gained by the establishment of institutions yielding the precious products of *authentic* Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, we and our “enemies” can march ahead as one to heights unseen.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE SECOND PRINTING

In the few months that have passed since this address was given and later issued in pamphlet form, publicists who wish the United Nations to continue the war until the Axis powers surrender unconditionally have been warning Americans of the grave dangers of any “negotiated peace”. There is much talk of the “sophistry of saving civilization by compromise” by writers who have preached the virtues of compromise as a political technique in staving off civil feuds. Evidently there is real fear that our countrymen might harken to the “still small voice of reason” in proposing or accepting an Armistice short of complete military triumph for either side. That such a victory would be an empty and meaningless event in any case, and particularly so if the death of ten million or more men was required to ensure “success”, is dimly sensed by many who are not directly touched by the pacifist mode of thought. The uneasy conscience and persistent guilty feelings (such as were evident after the devastation of Cologne and similar man-made disasters) of those who unenthusiastically support the war effort is some small indicator that for cultivated minds even utter defeat of the enemy does not evoke that exultation of spirit anticipated by others who delight in the prospect of compelling unconditional surrender and enjoying the satisfactions of primitive vengeance.

The chief criticism encountered by my proposal has centered upon the failure to bridge realistically the gap between faulty arguments for war and the humanistic ideals which animate the text. “We have been threatened—nay, actually attacked—and if we fail to kill the foe, then we shall be killed. The basic conviction of normal persons that the life of a decent man is more valuable than that of a criminal cannot be overcome by any emphasis upon factors common to both honest citizens and outlaws.” I do not pretend to have solved the profound ethical puzzles inherent in a world at conflict; but surely this need not be decisive against an armistice now. It is a fact that the Allies and the Nazis share in common the belief and the practice that murder, however this may be disguised by other names, is an admissible way of furthering one’s values. They are

even similar in such minor stupid brutalities as the reprisal shackling of prisoners in the name of the dignity of man! The vital and neglected consideration is that these barbarities be ended—but they will not stop so long as we continue armed combat.

Repugnant tho’ it may be to our pride to attempt to come to some understanding with those we call “criminals” (our opponents undoubtedly call us the same or worse), a cool calculation indicates that we may eventually solicit or welcome a termination of hostilities on other grounds strong enough to overcome this resistance. I hope I shall not be called a defeatist for making these estimates, but it seems to me that the chances that the Axis will conquer the United States are no greater than 10 or 20 in 100; the chances that we shall be able to garrison *both* Germany and Japan do not appear higher than 50 or 60 in 100; whereas, the chances of a prolonged attritional stalemate with both sides maintaining their homelands relatively intact and yet bleeding to death in a struggle along the outposts of their respective “spheres of influence” ought to be reckoned as about 80 or 90 in 100.

These possibilities may be wrongly appraised, and others may justly emphasize different components in the world configuration of forces. Nonetheless, I am impressed by what my atlas tells me: As of today (November, 1942) the Axis countries control a total population of about 800,000,000 out of a world total of approximately 2,200,000,000. About 100,000,000 (wise minority!) remain technically neutral. India contains 400,000,000 souls, but the disturbed political conditions there compel one to assign it largely to the “neutral” group. This leaves no more than 900,000,000 in our coalition, distributed as follows: United States (plus most of Latin America), 250,000,000; British Commonwealth (Great Britain plus dominions and colonies, but minus most of India), 200,000,000; Unoccupied China, 300,000,000 (?), and Unoccupied Russia, 150,000,000 (?). Statistically, one-third of mankind is arrayed against another third, with the remaining third on the sidelines or imperfectly coordinated with either combatant group for purposes of offense or defense. Where the struggle is on such a grand scale and, to a layman at least, so evenly balanced, it is difficult to see how, barring the intervention of some *deus ex machina*, either side can “win”, no matter how much each may be willing to “pay” for such a result. Certainly geographical, industrial, technological, and strategical factors are a barrier to any hope of a speedy collapse of one or the other adversary.

If the physical components seem fairly evenly poised, the complex of factors termed *morale* likewise seems to play no favorites. Americans at present cannot take refuge in the comforting thought that their fighting spirit is markedly superior to the enemy’s. In any country at any time there is a wide range of martial morale, but a crude average of the high and low areas over a period of years may be struck by a critical observer. Using this impressionistic method and employing Italy (sans malice!) as a base with a score of 100, I should judge Japanese morale to be about 200, the highest of all major belligerents. Others fall somewhere between these extremes. British and American morale seem to be much the same (say 140) with perhaps a shade in favor of the British, largely because of their more homogeneous population. German and Russian morale likewise appear to be identical (say 160) and both of them are probably somewhat above the English-speaking group chiefly because of the intensity of their ideological drives. I realize that national morale is as much a matter of quality, texture, and fibre as it is a commensurable quantity along some linear scale; and it certainly would be scandalous to consider it significant solely in connection with eagerness for battle. Even if simple adding and averaging of these intangibles provide but little clue to the shifting psychological resources of the combatants, it does not seem wise to disregard them; and when we do so, the picture of essential equivalence

remains unchanged. Plainly no nation monopolizes the will to sacrifice "blood, sweat, toil, and tears" in behalf of either real or imaginary values.

One can love his country, its institutions, and its people and still diagnose and prognose the present world situation as akin to an irresistible force vs. an immovable obstacle. When Thucydides passed a similar verdict upon the Peloponnesian War, he was acting in this spirit. Authentic patriotism does not require one to support foreign policies which lead nowhere and promise nothing more than the prospect of perpetual warfare. This war may conceivably last a decade or even a generation, and end in mutual exhaustion and pure loss without a decision being reached or a single major social issue being settled thereby. Unless my political arithmetic as calculated above is wholly in error, this grim probability seems much greater than the optimistic expectations that Tokyo and Berlin will be taken by assault in 1943.

I hope the prophets of a *short* war are right—but one way to make it still shorter is to end it now. Our government has not even tried to discover the terms on which its enemies might consent to a truce, and it has held forth none of its own save the threat of utter annihilation. Why couldn't we ask the Pope, the King of Sweden, or some similar figure to act as intermediary? Or are we strong for arbitration, conciliation, etc., in domestic matters and against them in more weighty international affairs? Of course, if "our side is right" as Professor Perry and others maintain, then the other fellow is utterly wrong (and evil, too); but a little sense of humor and experience with other forms of dispute should lead one to suspect that in truth both coalitions are partly right and also partly wrong. Wisdom and kindness together should prompt us to yield on some points in order to gain on others, rather than insisting on 100% for ourselves and zero for the opponent. As Mary Follett observed during the last war, some integration of rival purposes may then be achieved.

Have we the wit and the courage to try this method?

GEORGE W. HARTMANN



**RESOLUTION on behalf of the immediate setting up of
a Congressional Peace Aims Commission adopted at a public
meeting* of 500 persons held in New York City.**

Whereas we American citizens assembled in the Hotel Capitol, May 5th, 1942, recognize that the avowed purpose of our country in fighting this war is not only to preserve democracy and liberty at home but to extend them to all lands, and

Whereas we, on the other hand, believe that the continuance of the present conflict not only jeopardizes democracy and liberty here but renders ever more unlikely their realization abroad, and constitutes the ultimate threat to a durable peace and the building of an orderly post-war world, and

Whereas we believe that if the people of the Axis countries are to be successfully divorced from the mad dream of conquest, the United States must offer them some better hope of freedom and economic security than their present rulers, and

Whereas we believe that once again the peace will be lost if men of good will everywhere do not set about winning the peace while the war is yet in progress,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge upon our representatives in Washington the immediate setting up of a CONGRESSIONAL PEACE AIMS COMMISSION, for the speedy formulation of and publicizing to all the nations, Allied, neutral, and belligerent alike, the peace aims upon which our country would be willing to conclude the present intolerable conflict, such commission to consult experts, hold public hearings, and arrive at public findings to the end of bringing the war to an early and a satisfactory conclusion.

*The meeting was arranged by the Peace House with the assistance of the War Resisters League.